

For Immediate Release
Office of the Press Secretary
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U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Janet Napolitano announced today \$100 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds for the Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP), provided through a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) grant. With this funding, EFSP will have distributed more than \$3.4 billion in federal funds over the past 26 years to provide food and shelter to families in need across the United States.

"These ARRA funds will provide immediate relief to communities impacted by unemployment and poverty," said Secretary Napolitano. "The community organizations receiving this money not only support Americans in need, but also play a crucial role in helping to get our economy back on track and families back on their feet."

Today's ARRA funds come in addition to FEMA's \$200 million annual FY 2009 appropriation for EFSP announced in December.

Secretary Napolitano made the announcement at a United Way 2-1-1 Call Center, which helps connect individuals and families to social services, including organizations that benefit from EFSP funds. A National Board comprised of voluntary agencies oversees the program, while United Way of America, which serves as EFSP Executive Secretariat, administers the distribution of EFSP funds to social service agencies in more than 2,500 cities and counties.

EFSP was created in 1983 with a \$50 million federal appropriation to help meet the needs of hungry and homeless people throughout the United States and its territories by allocating federal funds for the provision of food and shelter. Appropriated annually by Congress under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, EFSP provides supplemental funds to more than 12,000 agencies.

The ARRA, signed into law by President Obama on Feb. 19, provided more than \$3 billion for

DHS activities and needs, via direct appropriation and the General Services Administration (GSA). Of that amount, \$100 million was appropriated for EFSP.

EFSP uses measures of unemployment and poverty to allocate the funds it receives from FEMA to city and county jurisdictions around the country. To serve areas in need that do not qualify based on this formula, the National Board established the State Set-Aside program in 1987, which awards additional funds to address areas of high need, including those with recent spikes in unemployment and isolated pockets of homelessness or poverty, among others.

EFSP funds can be used for a broad range of services, including: mass shelter; mass feeding; food distribution through food pantries and food banks; one-month assistance with rent; mortgage and utility payments to prevent evictions; and transition assistance from shelters to stable living conditions. ESFP's objectives are to allocate funds to the neediest areas; to ensure fast response; to foster public-private sector partnerships; to ensure local decision-making; and to maintain minimal but accountable reporting.